

CLAIMS

1. A device for positioning in the workplace of a worker, the device being operable, in the worker's absence from said workplace, to provide a visitor to the workplace with information specifying the remote location of the worker and to
5 enable the visitor to communicate with the absent worker;
the device comprising processing means, a display and a user interface;
the processing means being adapted to access a database holding data representative of a remote location and corresponding data representative of at least one possible mode of communication between the device and the remote
10 worker at the said remote location;
the processing means being electrically coupled to the digital display and the user interface;
the display being operable to display information specifying the remote location of the worker;
15 the processing means being operable to interrogate the database to obtain the possible modes of communication corresponding to the said specified remote location of the worker, and then to cause the said modes of communication to be displayed for selection by the visitor;
the user interface being operable to enable a visitor to select a mode of
20 communication;
and the processing means being configured to effect communication with the worker using the selected mode of communication.
2. A device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the processing means are configured
25 such that the data specifying the remote location of the worker may be remotely edited via a communications network.

3. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, wherein the processing means and database are operable to receive occasion-specific data from the worker specifying the modes of communication available for selection by a visitor.
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4. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, wherein available modes of communication specific to given remote locations are pre-specified and stored in the database and, in use, the processor is configured to interrogate the database to obtain the available modes of communication corresponding to the remote
- 10 location specified by the worker on that occasion.
5. A device as claimed in any of Claims 1 to 4, being secure such that a visitor or unauthorised person cannot edit the data specifying the worker's remote location or the available modes of communication.
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6. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, wherein the processing means and database are configured to require a correct password to be supplied in order to enable editing of the data specifying the worker's remote location or the available modes of communication.
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7. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, further comprising a data communications interface for communicatively connecting the device to a data communications network.
- 25 8. A device as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the data communications interface is adapted to receive data from a specified address only.

9. A device as claimed in Claim 7 or Claim 8, wherein the data communications interface is adapted to receive data over an authenticated network connection only.
- 5 10. A device as claimed in Claim 8 or Claim 9, wherein the data communications interface is adapted to transmit data to a specified address only.
11. A device as claimed in Claim 8 or Claim 10, wherein the specified address is hard coded into the device.
- 10 12. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, further comprising a telephone communications interface for communicatively connecting the device to a telephone communications network.
- 15 13. A device as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the telephone communications interface comprises a subscriber identity module adapted to enable outgoing communications to be made to a specified telephone number only.
- 20 14. A device as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the subscriber identity module is further adapted to permit incoming communications from a specified telephone number only.
15. A device as claimed in any of Claims 12 to 14, wherein the specified telephone number is hard coded into the device.
- 25 16. A device as claimed in any of Claims 12 to 15, being responsive to dual tone multi-frequency tones, said tones being interpretable to enable the remote

worker to edit the data specifying the worker's remote location or the available modes of communication.

17. A device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the processing means are configured such that the data specifying the remote location of the worker or the available modes of communication may only be edited at the device itself.
18. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, wherein the possible modes of communication are selected from a group comprising: e-mail, telephone call, video conference, fax.
19. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, wherein the user interface comprises user-selectable regions corresponding to possible modes of communication with the worker.
20. A device as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the user-selectable regions comprise buttons.
21. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, wherein the user interface comprises a touchscreen area.
22. A device as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the touchscreen area is operable to receive hand-written input from the visitor for transmission to the worker.
23. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim further comprising a communication device selected from a group comprising: a microphone, a speaker, a telephone handset, a video camera.

24. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, configured to display a video image of the worker working in his remote location.
- 5 25. A device as claimed in any preceding Claim, adapted to synchronise with calendar software on the remote worker's computer and thereby automatically update the information specifying the remote location of the worker.
- 10 26. A device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.